

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of entry 03/26/2025

On March 7, 2025, Daniel Cox (Cox), Date of Birth (DOB) [REDACTED], telephone number [REDACTED], was interviewed at the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Tennessee in Nashville, TN, in preparation for trial. AUSA Taylor Phillips, DOJ Attorney Blake Ellison, and FBI Special Agent Clayton D. Worcester Jr. were present for the interview.

After being advised of the identity of the interviewing Agent and the nature of the interview, Cox provided the following information:

Cox works as one of two lawyers for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, where he has worked for approximately the last two years. During Cox's last semester of college, he did an internship with the TN State Legislature. Cox became involved in campaign work, working on Randy Boyd's unsuccessful Tennessee Gubernatorial campaign in 2018. Cox met a number of people involved in TN State politics during that time and ultimately moved to Nashville and began working with Chip Saltsman (Saltsman). Cox worked for Saltsman from approximately May 2020 to sometime in 2022.

During his time with the caucus, Cox worked on the operational aspects of the funds. The caucus would work with "at-risk" seats in the House, working with those candidates to make the campaign as strong as they could. They spent money on "ground work", i.e. door knocking, mailers, independent expenditures.

Cox did not know Glen Casada (Casada) personally. Cox acknowledged he may have interacted with him, but he did no specifically remember any interactions.

Cox did not know Cade Cothren (Cothren) very well either, but again, acknowledged he may have had some interaction with him when Cothren was Casada's Chief of Staff.

Cox knew Robin Smith (Smith) a bit more because she was part of the campaign

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committee that would approve or deny different items to go out for the campaigns the caucus was assisting. Cox met Smith through the committee, but did not interact or see her outside of the capitol building/committee meetings.

Cox remembered news articles coming out painting Cothren in a bad light. The articles pertained to Cothren and activities (sexual in nature) in Party Foul restaurant bathrooms and Cothren's alleged drug use in the capitol building. Cox remembered Casada sticking by/supporting Cothren during that time, or at least that was the impression Cox got.

With regard to Casada being voted out as Speaker of The House, Cox got the feeling that Casada had gotten out over his skis a bit and that he had it coming. Cox had gotten the impression that Casada was a bit "slimy".

Phoenix Solutions

Cox heard of Phoenix Solutions during a committee meeting discussing vendors to be used for work on campaigns. As a consultant, Cox and other consultants would regularly discuss vendors with the campaign committee. Smith suggested Phoenix Solutions as a vendor to use on campaigns. Smith said she had worked with Phoenix Solutions before and they were great and that Matthew Phoenix (Phoenix) had been great to work with. Smith went on to say that Phoenix used to work in the Washington, D.C. area, but got tired of things up there and had relocated to Arizona. Based on Smith's recommendation, the caucus used Phoenix Solutions (and some other vendors) for mailers.

Cox was provided a phone number for Matthew Phoenix. Cox thought the number possibly came from Johnny Garrett, but he may have gotten it from Saltsman. At the time, Garrett was the majority whip. Cox was shown an email from September 24, 2020. The email was from Cox to Phoenix in which Cox introduced himself to Phoenix. Cox recognized the email and remembered it. Cox remembered his first phone call with Phoenix. He believed a female answered the phone and when "Phoenix" got on the phone and they began to talk, Cox said it "raised every red flag". It sounded as if Phoenix was doing an impersonation or the voice was fake, and Phoenix would take long unnatural pauses. It was as if he was either thinking about his responses carefully, or he was using a voice changer or something. Cox thought something was off. Cox went to Kathy Carrigan and Kevin Johnson. Cox believed Johnson was the Chief of Staff (House) at the time. When Cox told Johnson about his concerns, Johnson told him to just keep doing what he was doing with Phoenix.

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Cox stated he had a drafted budget for certain items related to the campaign of every race they were assisting with. He was shown an invoice from Phoenix Solutions dated 10/1/2020. The invoice was for Possell, Gillespie, and Dawson (likely work done on those campaigns) and the amount on the invoice was \$11,991.98. Cox recognized the invoice. Cox was shown an email dated 10/31/2020 from Matthew Phoenix about three (3) outstanding invoices, (10/01/2020 for \$11,991.98, 10/18/2020 for \$11,883.73, and 10/27/2020 for \$21,528.80). Cox recognized these as well.

Cox spoke to Kevin Johnson again and Johnson requested Cox record a call with Matthew Phoenix. Johnson asked if he had any upcoming calls with Phoenix and asked if he could make the call with Saltsman and Johnson in the room. A recording of a phone call was played for Cox. Cox remembered the call and recognized the voices as his own and of "Matthew Phoenix". Another recording of a phone call was played and again, Cox remembered the call and recognized the voices as his own and that of "Matthew Phoenix".

When asked about working with Phoenix Solutions and the work they did, Cox said they just seemed to "get it". They would be given some target information and the product they produces would be "spot on". Cox came to know who was actually behind Phoenix Solutions after the FBI search of the capitol building and based on his own suspicion that something was off with the company. Cox thought Cothren may be involved just based on his own interactions with Phoenix. Cox heard Smith and Casada were involved with Phoenix Solutions at some point, maybe in the news or maybe through other people.

Cox said Phoenix Solutions could operate without conflict with the TN State Legislature because they were "out of state". With vendors doing any work, one would want to make sure to avoid any coordination with the campaign/candidate so the fact that Smith, Casada, and Cothren were involved would have raised concerns about the work being done and the assignment of that work.

Cox had heard of River's Edge Alliance and believed it was Smith's consulting company, but he was not sure.

Cox was not familiar with Right Way Solutions.

Cox was generally aware of a postage account, but never dealt with it or had any interaction with those accounts.

When asked whether he had any of the recordings, Cox said he did not. Cox

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believed he called from his number and the recordings were possibly made with Saltsman's or Johnson's phone or a recording device. Cox may have recorded the calls on a Mac laptop, but that laptop was no longer in use or in his possession.